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was furnished to Swainson by the Hudson Bay Company, and was most probably therefore killed north of the Columbia river. No specimen exactly like it has been lately obtained.

NORTHERN SHRIKE (*C. borealis*). I shot a specimen, the only one I saw, at Fort Dalles, October 15th,—early in the season for it to appear even in that latitude. It was savagely attacking Jays and Magpies, driving them before it, but it did not kill any birds while I observed it.

VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*? *V. Bartramii* Swainson?). I found this species quite common from the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains to that of the Bitterroot Range, and in habits found it exactly like the eastern *olivaceus*. As it is larger than that mentioned by Swainson, his specimen was very probably, as Baird suggests, of the next species, especially since this is found unchanged at Fort Bridges, Utah.

WARBLING VIREO (*V. gilvus*). Rather less common than the preceding in the Rocky Mountains, though very common west of the Cascade Range. I noticed nothing new in its habits.—*To be continued.*

AN AFTERNOON IN NICARAGUA.

BY WILLIAM H. DALL.

WHEN the agent of the Central American Transit Company announced to us, that on account of the low water, we might be detained a day or two at Greytown, we did not consider ourselves unfortunate by any means. A collecting party was quickly organized, and, after partaking of fried plantains and "tortillas," with a cup of coffee from the hands of a señorita very much the color of the beverage just mentioned, each one started out prepared to make the best of the six hours of daylight remaining, by dispersing into the bushes in search of specimens of all kinds. Previous, how-

ever, to our departure, a person showed us a bottle of whiskey, which he asserted contained the most poisonous reptile extant. On examination it proved to be a specimen of a very beautiful snake, banded with red, black, white and cream-color, and of a genus (*Elaps? euryxanthus* Ken.) which is perfectly harmless. In vain we pointed out the jaws, totally destitute of fangs, and almost toothless, and were again assured that it was the far-famed "coral snake," of which the bite was inevitably followed by a bloody sweat, and death in most awful agonies. Not wishing to waste time in discussing the point, we separated, each striking into the heavy growth of bushes back of the town, or following the sandy beach to the entrance of the lagoon, now no longer a harbor.

I pushed into the jungle by a narrow foot-path winding among the trees, which, with the vines and even the grasses, appeared each one to vie with all others in the production of hooks, thorns and prickles. The mosquitoes, too, were by no means idle. The path soon brought me to the edge of a small lagoon, surrounded with trees and vines, and presenting a most beautiful scene. Here and there on the sunny side of a log, were small lizards with their sides brightly banded with metallic blue or green, chestnut and black. Everything was quiet, but a mellow humming told of insect life hovering among the green leaves.

The most noticeable among the many plants which were growing in the water, was a gigantic *Sagittaria*, rising above the water six or eight feet; its beautiful pointed leaves and white flowers bearing a great similarity to the common Arrow-head of the Massachusetts ponds. Rich crimson orchids were to be seen growing in the branches of the higher trees; but, after considerable exertion, having dislodged one of them, I was disappointed by finding it coarse and unattractive on a nearer inspection. Leaves of a nymphaceous plant, like our yellow pond-lily, but no flowers, were seen on the surface of the water.

The mosquitoes soon put an end to my pleasure in surveying the beauty of this secluded spot, and I made my way with some difficulty between the wild pineapples, which, bearing no edible fruit, add a positive evil to their deficiency of good, by pushing in every direction their sharp, saw-like, and inflexible leaves.

Reaching an open spot I saw a beautiful bird balancing himself on a slender twig, and occasionally uttering a plaintive note, of no great melody, but far from disagreeable, as is the case with many tropical birds. His body was a rich chestnut brown, and the underside of the tail of a bright golden-hue. A lucky shot added him to my collection. It was the Inca Bird (*Ostenops Montezuma*); the "Oro-pendula" or Golden-tail of the Spaniards. Another moment and a flash of fire seemed to pass from one bough to another; my gun was brought into requisition again, and I brought down a fine male Fire Bird (*Ramphocelus passerina*), probably one of the most beautiful of American birds. The body is of the most brilliant scarlet, and the wings and tail jet glossy black. Others of our party obtained another species (*R. icteronata*) almost equally beautiful, where the most brilliant yellow on the rump and back takes the place of scarlet; while still another (*R. sanguinolenta*) glories in a dress of the richest velvety maroon.

It was growing rather dark in the dense thicket, and I retraced my steps towards the beach. On my way I added several other interesting birds (*Momot*) to my collection, and one, a dark-colored, sad-looking bird, which proved the greatest prize of all, being a new species, afterwards described by Mr. Lawrence as *Spermophila badiiventris*. Reaching the edge of the wood, I found a small brook between me and the sand. The banks being low, were covered for several rods on the farther side, with a succulent plant of the order *Portulacaceæ*, with round leaves about half an inch in diameter. I noticed little well-beaten paths, about one inch wide, running all through this bed of green,

and stopped to discover if possible what made them. Some were wider than others, and on one of these I soon discovered a foraging party of ants. They were of two species, one being a rather small black ant, with weak jaws or nippers, and the other nearly twice that size, each bearing a formidable pair of prolonged mandibles or jaws, and as near as I could see there were no two with jaws of exactly the same size or shape. The small ones were evidently slaves. They were marched between two rows of scouts, and if a slave attempted to pass the line, he was speedily seized and put back, not very gently, into his place. I watched their motions with a great deal of interest. The "soldiers," after searching till satisfied for a rich succulent leaf, bit it off and gave it to a slave, who immediately marched off with it in a contrary direction to the main body. Following the train for a rod or two, I came to the brook just where it had made an abrupt bend, with an eddy in it. Here the banks were rather high, a moderately brisk sea-breeze was coming from the shore, and just here a small tree about two inches in diameter had fallen across the brook. On this pole were myriads of ants going in different directions. Those above, each with a leaf in his mouth, were crossing to the wooded side. Those on the underside were empty-handed (or mouthed), and were coming from the woods. Here I noticed a curious thing. The leaf, being larger by far than its bearer, acted as a sort of sail to catch the wind, and I saw many an unfortunate slave-ant, after struggling with all its might to save its precious load, finally let it go in self-defence, and immediately join the excursionists on the lower side of the pole, going back for another leaf. In the eddy before mentioned, there was at least a bushel of these leaves which had been blown away from their bearers.*

The red light of the setting sun warned me to be stirring homeward; and, picking up a few Apple-snails (*Ampullariæ*), I walked briskly towards town. Stopping for a moment to

*Probably a species of *Cecodoma*. — EDITORS.

turn over a bit of plank in search of land shells, to my great delight, there lay snugly coiled up, one of the famous "coral snakes!" Taking his head between my finger and thumb, I let him coil around my wrist, and made the best of my way to the office of the Railroad Survey, determined to prove the harmless nature of the pretty little creature. Upon producing it, however, two of my English friends disappeared through the window, and the one before mentioned reaching the loft over head, in a great hurry, seized an empty bottle (there were plenty of them there), and adjured me in forcible language to depart and take the snake with me, on pain of several things too disagreeable to mention. Doubting the efficacy of argument in the premises, I consigned the snake to an alcohol tank, and took the story to the supper table, where it afforded us a fund of amusement for the evening, and was by no means the most disagreeable reminiscence of my afternoon in Greytown.

REVIEWS.

TRAVELS IN THE EAST INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO.*—The object of Prof. Bickmore's travels was the collection of a set of shells from the island of Amboina and its immediate neighborhood. In this Mr. Bickmore seems to have fully succeeded, and thanks to his energy and perseverance, we now have in this country a full suite of the species first described by Rumphius. The present volume merely states this object and describes the mode of its attainment. Otherwise it is a diary of the author's daily experience among these tropical islands, in which mountains, lakes, rivers, plants and animals, incidents and accidents, are all described as they happened. The coast tribes are said to be of a mild disposition, but those of the interior mountainous parts of the different islands, wild and savage; in some cases cannibals. The ethnological characteristics of the different tribes are given whenever practicable, and the details of their dress, and habits of life sometimes accompanied by photographs and drawings of great value.

"All the natives (Malays, of Java) are remarkably short in stature, the

*Travels in the East Indian Archipelago. By Albert S. Bickmore, M. A. 8vo, pp. 552. Sent to us by H. A. Brown & Co., Boston.